

REVIEWS OF BOOKS.

TEXT-BOOK OF ABDOMINAL SURGERY. A Clinical Manual for Practitioners and Students. By SKENE KEITH, F.R.C.S., Ed.; assisted by GEORGE E. KEITH, M.B., C.M. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1894.

The book is the work of two sons of Dr. James Keith. The object of the book, as learned from the preface, is to present a systematic treatise on abdominal surgery as practised at the present day. They do not propose making an extensive compilation, but have depended more particularly upon their own experience and observation.

The book is divided into two parts, general abdominal surgery and abdominal surgery peculiar to women. The first chapters deal with the methods of making an abdominal examination, and go at length into the different kinds of abdominal tumors, with their diagnosis and differential diagnosis. Reckless exploratory incision is condemned most severely.

The preparation for an abdominal operation is made delightfully easy. The operation is done preferably at the patient's house. There need be no taking up of carpets or preliminary house-cleaning. The pubes of the patient need not be shaved, and the skin requires no preparation beyond washing with soap and water, followed by bichloride solution just before operating. Ordinarily prepared catgut is used, and the sponges are prepared by washing them thoroughly in a soda solution after the previous operation and putting them in a solution of carbolic acid. The operation is performed through a hole in a rubber sheet. The edges of the hole are smeared with a kind of adhesive plaster, so that they will stick to the patient.

Ether is given in preference to chloroform, *because it produces less vomiting.*

The after-treatment is gone into at length, and is one of the most valuable chapters in the book. Stress is laid on the importance of intestinal paresis and the modes of preventing and treating it.

The rest of the book is divided into chapters, each dealing with the surgery of a certain region. The general plan of one of these chapters is to give a short abstract of the anatomy of the region from Quain's "Anatomy;" mention a few of the surgical diseases, with their diagnosis, differential diagnosis, and symptoms; and give a description of a few of the commoner operations.

The chapter on the stomach is noticeable for the vagueness of its descriptions, the absence of illustrative diagrams, and the evident lack of experience by the authors in the procedures described.

The chapter on the intestines describes at length the various kinds of obstruction, following Treves very closely; and then takes up the commoner operations. Circular enterorrhaphy is done with a continuous suture, and ten minutes is considered ample time. Colotomy and the other operations are described briefly after the usual methods. The chapters on the liver and kidneys present practically what is found in all of our general text-books.

Part II takes up the subject of gynæcological abdominal surgery. Each subject is illustrated with interesting cases, mostly from the service of the elder Keith, in which the minor details from the bedside notes are recorded in full.

Apostoli's method of treating fibromyomata is praised most highly and excellent results from its use are reported.

In the closing chapters on major obstetrical operations the authors are very evidently writing about a subject in which they have had no experience. The chapter on symphyseotomy consists of an abstract from an early paper by Harris, of Philadelphia. Laparo-elytrotomy is given as the preferable operation for removing a child from the uterus, although Thomas, the originator of the operation and its chief advocate, has long since given it up and declared himself in favor of Cæsarean section.

Some of the omissions of the book are a little surprising. Murphy's buttons are not mentioned. The ureters are dismissed by saying that if cut the ends should be sewed together, if possible, otherwise the kidney should be extirpated. Cholecystenterorrhaphy is not mentioned except as a procedure to cure a biliary fistula; and Alexander's operation is omitted entirely, retroversion being treated by removing an ovary and suturing the stump into the abdominal wound.

Another surprising feature is the etiological importance attributed to a chill. In the beginning chapters we are told to keep the patient warm while being tapped so that he does not "catch a chill" that may be followed by acute peritonitis. In other places we find a chill given as a direct cause of pyonephrosis, appendicitis, acute peritonitis, salpingitis, and suppuration of an ovarian cyst; and, at least, a predisposing cause of tubercular nephritis. After once having had an attack of appendicitis, the patient should be advised to wear a bandage the rest of his life to prevent having a chill.

But little use has been made of the recent literature in preparing the book. The illustrations are few, and consist mostly of anatomical diagrams and instruments. The descriptions of the operations are vague and lacking in detail. Usually only one method of doing an operation is given, and that often is not the best one.

On the whole, the book cannot be accepted as an adequate exposition of the present state of knowledge and practice in the field which it essays to cover. Its chief value lies in the information which it gives of the opinions and methods of the authors, and indirectly of their distinguished father, from whom the younger men have presumably derived their inspiration.

GEORGE R. WHITE.

ANTISEPSIS AND ANTISEPTICS. By CHARLES MILTON BUCHANAN, M.D. 12mo, pp. 352. Newark, N. J.: The Terhune Company, 1895.

In this little book is found an excellent summary of our present knowledge of antiseptics in the treatment of wounds. Beginning with a very good historical review of antiseptics in wound treatment,